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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: INDIA-PAKISTAN RELATIONS; NEW DELHI.

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INDIA-PAKISTAN RELATIONS

¶1. "HOW SERIOUSLY CAN WE TAKE ZARDARI'S COMMENT?" op-ed article in November 25 centrist DAINIK BHASKAR Hindi daily by foreign affairs writer Ved Pratap Vaidik: "What's the similarity between Rajiv Gandhi (former Indian prime minister) and Pakistan President Asif Ali Zardari? Both got the PM's throne by a quirk of fate. But there's another big similarity - their penchant to say nice things, and their eagerness to please. Zardari made a sensational offer of no-first-strike against India on Saturday. His comment should be seen in the above context - the penchant to please! Rajiv Gandhi also once said Moscow he wants entire Asia to be nuclear weapons free, little knowing that India had been officially declining the same proposed by Pakistan. Zardari's statement too seems misplaced. Though his statement is in keeping with his friendly overtures, it has made New Delhi skeptical."

¶2. "ZARDARI'S PROPOSAL," editorial in November 25 centrist NAVBHARAT TIMES Hindi daily: "Pakistan President Asif Ali Zardari's recent sensational offer is an old

diplomatic gimmick in which Pakistan replies with non-nuclear-South Asia in response to India's no-first-strike pact and it ends with India's global-disarmament-proposal. Why just South Asia! The entire world should be nuclear weapon-free. Actually, it is nothing, but mere talks. Anyways, it would not be acceptable to the Pakistan army, which still remains one of the most powerful institutions in the country. But, if it makes positive strides in improving relations between the two countries the Indian government should take initiative to support it. This is the right time when the Pakistan government should pacify the Pakistani rulers, worried due to the narrow map of the country divided within Afghanistan-based U.S. troops. India will also someday have to leave behind the bitterness of Pakistan's involvement in the Indian Embassy blast in Afghanistan and the long-lasting turmoil in Kashmir. Why not now?"

13. "THE ZARDARI EFFECT" editorial in the November 26, 2008, Mumbai edition of left-of-center Marathi daily LOKSATTA. "Some of the statements made by Pakistan President Asif Zardari are indeed welcome for India and quite shocking for the hardliners in Pakistan. He recently said that India and Pakistan share blood ties. Immediately after coming to power, he ruled out the possibility of a nuclear attack against India. He did not legitimize the separatist violence in the Kashmir valley and instead promised to work towards a peaceful solution to the Kashmir tangle. Many in India and Pakistan do not have faith in Zardari's seemingly welcome

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statements. But the point is that Zardari has made those remarks and there is no valid reason to believe that he is making these remarks inadvertently... Zardari is an astute politician who has realized the need to maintain friendly trade and military relations with India in the current political climate. Zardari's positive approach towards India is also symptomatic of the change in the mindset of Pakistani politicians. Even the Nawaz Sharif-led Pakistan Muslim League has in a way supported Zardari's stance..."

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